AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

LISTING OF CLAIMS

1-21. (Cancelled)

22. (New) A software management system for use in a vehicle, comprising:

a portable memory device adapted to store software files and diagnostic information;

multiple vehicle processors connected to a system bus of the vehicle and each adapted to generate diagnostic information indicating success of software installation on the respective vehicle processor;

a communications port of the vehicle;

an interface processor connected to the communications port and the system bus, wherein the interface processor is adapted to, when the portable memory device is connected to the communications port:

identify software files stored on the portable memory device for each of the multiple vehicle processors,

load the identified software files onto the multiple vehicle processors, and

transmit diagnostic information received from the multiple vehicle processors to the portable memory device; and

an external processor having a communications port and adapted to receive the diagnostic information from the portable memory device and to analyze the diagnostic information to determine successful software installation on the vehicle.

23.   (New) The system of claim 22 wherein the communications ports of the vehicle and the external processor comprise open architecture communication ports.

24.   (New) The system of claim 23 wherein the communications ports of the vehicle and the external processor comprise universal serial bus ports, and the portable memory device comprises a universal serial bus drive.

25.   (New) The system of claim 22 wherein the portable memory device stores software files for multiple vehicle types, and the interface processor identifies the software files based at least in part on vehicle type.

26.   (New) The system of claim 22, wherein the multiple vehicle processors generate the diagnostic information by automatically performing self-tests on the installed software.

27.　(New)　A vehicle comprising:

a communications port;

multiple vehicle processors connected to a system bus of the vehicle and adapted to generate diagnostic information indicating success of software installation on the multiple vehicle processors; and

an interface processor connected to the communications port and the system bus, wherein the interface processor is adapted to, when a portable memory device is connected to the communications port:

identify software files stored on the portable memory device for each of the multiple vehicle processors,

load the identified software files onto the multiple vehicle processors, and

transmit diagnostic information received from the multiple vehicle processors to the portable memory device.

28.　(New)　The vehicle of claim 27 wherein the communications port comprises an open architecture communication port.

29.　(New)　The vehicle of claim 28 wherein the communications port comprises a universal serial bus port.

30.   (New) The vehicle of claim 27 wherein the portable memory device stores software files for multiple vehicle types, and the interface processor identifies the software files based at least in part on vehicle type.

31.   (New) The vehicle of claim 27 wherein the multiple vehicle processors generate the diagnostic information by automatically performing self-tests on the installed software.

32. (New) A vehicle software installation method for use in vehicle assembly, comprising:

establishing communication between a portable memory device and an interface processor of a vehicle via a communications port of the vehicle, wherein the interface processor is connected to multiple vehicle processors of the vehicle via a system bus of the vehicle;

employing the interface processor to identify, for each of the multiple vehicle processors, software files on the portable memory device, and to load the software files received over the communications port onto the multiple vehicle processors;

installing the software files on the multiple vehicle processors;

transferring diagnostic information indicating success of software installation from the multiple vehicle processors to the portable memory device via the interface processor;

establishing communication between the portable memory device and an external processor via a communications port of the external processor; and

analyzing the diagnostic information via the external processor to determine success of software installation in the vehicle.

33. (New) The method of claim 32 further comprising employing open architecture communications ports as the communications ports.

34. (New) The method of claim 33 further comprising employing universal serial bus ports as the communications ports.

35. (New) The method of claim 32 further comprising employing a universal serial bus drive as the portable memory device.

36. (New) The method of claim 32 further comprising storing software files for multiple vehicle types on the portable memory device, and identifying the software files based at least in part on vehicle type.

37. (New) The method of claim 32 further comprising generating the diagnostic information by automatically performing self-tests on the installed software.